

'I Could See A Guy And He

By Richard H. Weiss
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

When a huge explosion rocked the breakfast-time quiet of Claytonia Terrace in Richmond Heights this morning, some residents thought it was an earthquake. But others knew right away that it was a bomb.

Windows rattled. Dishes shook in the

cupboards. Pieces of debris were scattered across lawns, some of them landing in the back yard gardens of the two- and four-family brick flats.

In front of one of the flats at 1115 Claytonia, smoke and fire rose from the shattered remains of a black, late-model Cadillac. Residents rushed from their homes to see a man they knew as a quiet, hard-working produce stand

operator lying in the streets, his legs blown off.

The man was John Paul Spica, who died from the force of the explosion caused, police believe, when a bomb beneath the driver's seat of his car exploded at 8 a.m. Neighbors say it was a sight they will never forget.

Louis Ferretti, who lived next door to Spica at 1111 Claytonia, recalled: "I

Didn't Have Any Legs'

was getting out of bed when I heard this explosion. I could see a guy lying where he's lying now and he didn't have any legs."

Ferretti's brother George, who lives in the flat above his brother's, described the explosion as "a big flash. There was no question it was a bomb. I came running out and he was just falling out of the car. We all began

running around asking each other what are we going to do, what are we going to do? We were just hysterical."

George Ferretti said he regained his composure, went into his house, got a blanket and threw it over the body. Someone else called the police and fire departments.

A woman who lives in the
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Neighbors

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neighborhood said the explosion sounded like an earthquake. "The earth started shaking," said the woman, who asked that her name not be given. "I ran out looked at him and said, 'He's still alive, he's still alive, go out there and help him.'"

The gruesome scene quickly drew a horde of spectators. Some of them, who said they live more than a block away from the scene of the bombing, said their windows and dishes were rattled from the force of the explosion.

Word spread quickly. One woman who lives on the other side of Highway 40 brought her two preschool-age children to see what had happened.

Spectators were kept away from the car by a police barricade. But debris was scattered for yards. The radio from the Cadillac was blown about 15 yards away. A man's shoe was lying in the front yard of a duplex. Police combed the neighborhood for evidence.

Spica apparently was not well known by his immediate neighbors. Louis Ferretti said he believed Spica had lived in the neighborhood three or four years. "He used to go to work, come home and that was about all I knew of him," he said.

He said he had once asked Spica why his Cadillac bore Illinois license plates. Spica told him that he wanted to save taxes, Ferretti said.

George Ferretti described Spica as a very quiet man. "During the summer he'd wake up at 5 a.m. and go to his produce stand," he said. "You'd never see him. I never had a conversation with him."